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TCS-4166-58/A

Tab C

(TH 3512-8)

23 December 1958

LONG RANGE AVIATION

Urgency of Information:

1. Establishing the precise total size of the heavy bomber force is vital in determining the nature and magnitude of the immediate Soviet air threat and will provide a reliable basis for projecting judgments of future Soviet strategic force compositions. The new follow-on heavy bomber is not expected to be available operationally in the immediate future due to production lead-time requirements.

Gravity of Threat:

2. The intercontinental attack capability of Soviet Long Range Aviation represents the gravest military threat to the United States until an additional nuclear delivery capability with new weapon systems is acquired. Since its inception, Long Range Aviation has made steady progress in becoming a truly intercontinental bombing force, and further modernization of its components are expected to include increases in the numbers of heavy bombers and additional operational aerial tankers to increase the two-way capability of Soviet Long Range Aviation.

Availability of Information:

25X1D1a

4. Soviet security measures and travel restrictions have prevented observation of all heavy bomber operational home bases and factual intelligence of heavy bomber strengths remains inadequate. Although the Soviets have demonstrated aerial refueling equipment in an air show rehearsal in the Moscow area and sightings of the new BOUNDER aircraft indicate it may have a probe for aerial refueling, verifying refueling capabilities from ground vantage points distant from airfields is extremely difficult.

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2

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Priority:

5. Close scrutiny of Soviet progress in the field of long range ballistic missiles is required in order to determine its impact on heavy bomber programming during the next few years. This is of utmost importance in providing the information on Soviets plans and policy regarding future heavy bomber strengths and their relation to other weapon systems in the Soviet strategic force composition. In the immediate future, heavy bomber requirements are most important than high priority requirements and will remain as highest priority until fulfilled. However, because of the factors related to in the paragraphs above, they are slightly below ICBM requirement on the highest priority structure.

Target Analysis:

6. The BISON and BEAR order of battle has not been confirmed. Saratov-Engels and Chepelevka, most closely associated with Soviet Long Range Aviation, have not been observed since 1954. Intelligence estimates activities of these type aircraft at Poltava, Olenaya, Orsha S.W., and Anadyr/Leninka.

7. The bomber development program has included the Moscow airfields at Fili, Ramenskoye, and Shcholkovo. BOUNDER is associated with the former two airfields.

8. Aircraft production facilities at Kuybyshev, Kazan and Irkutsk are estimated to be producing or capable of producing heavy bombers. Production of new type aircraft and data for precise production capacities may be revealed.

OACSI (cy 2)

ONI (cy 3)

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